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PUBLIC NOTICE---REQUEST FOR PUBLIC COMMENT COLUMBIA RIVER IMPACT EVALUATION PLAN

The U.S. Department of Energy, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and Washington Department of Ecology invite you to comment on the *Columbia River Impact Evaluation Plan*. This document outlines work to clarify any localized environmental impact to the Columbia River near the now-inactive nuclear reactors at the Hanford site.

The public comment period will begin July 6 and end August 5.

This document is available to the public for comment at the same time as regulator final review. This is done as part of an effort to involve the public before final decisions are made. As needed, the document will be revised to incorporate significant comments by the public and the regulators.

Background

The Tri-Party Agreement contains milestones to direct Hanford cleanup activities. One such milestone, M-30-02, requires a plan to determine cumulative health and environmental impacts to the Columbia River in the 100 Area. This document was prepared to satisfy that milestone.

The plan focuses on the Hanford Reach of the Columbia River along the 100 Area adjacent to Hanford's nine inactive nuclear reactors. Information on contamination in groundwater, river water, river sediment, plants, fish, and other wildlife was reviewed to develop the plan. Those contaminants with the greatest potential for showing an effect were used. A preliminary impact evaluation was made to assess the adequacy of existing data. The Columbia River Impact Evaluation Plan was developed to fill the identified data gaps. In the document impacts are defined as identifiable and measurable contamination that results from past and present 100 area operations.

The preliminary evaluation suggests no observable large-scale effects from Hanford Site contaminants to the Columbia River ecosystem in the 100 Area, however localized impact may exist at the points of groundwater discharge. Implementation of the plan will provide additional information to quantify effects at these localized areas. Thus, additional data collection tasks include river sediment sampling; determining groundwater contaminant flow rates into the river; identifying the behavior of chromium metal in the river; and evaluating the rate of groundwater mixing with river water in the groundwater discharge zone. A schedule for completing these tasks is included in the plan.

Hanford contamination from the reactors is detected downstream of the 100 Area and the analysis of this extent will be the subject of an upcoming investigation. The current document available for your review is a focused

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effort for the 100 Area. Public involvement is requested for the analysis of down-river data and work-plan development to satisfy identified data needs.

If you would like to review the document, please visit the information repository nearest to your location. You can also request a copy of the document by calling the Hanford cleanup toll-free line at 1-800-321-2008.

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Questions or written comments may be directed to: Larry Gadbois, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, 712 Swift Blvd, Suite 5, Richland, WA 99352 or call (509) 376-9884.

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